

Meeting Notes
Tenant Work Group
Tuesday, May 12, 2009
Executive Conference Room
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

In attendance: Maureen Ross (acting chair), Rick Nelson, Chuck Short, Harrietta Kelly, Alice Wilkerson, Guy Johnson, Felicia Eberling, Dale Tibbitts, Debbie Spielberg, Patrice Cheatham

Via Conference Call: Lesa Hoover

Agenda

- Minutes review and approval
- Code discussion debrief
- Long branch event debrief
- Website comments review
- Survey Updates
- Work plan updates
- Other business
- Public Comment

Notes:

Maureen Ross chaired the meeting in Matt Losak's absence and convened at 6:30 pm. Copies of the minutes were not available and therefore the approval was postponed until the next meeting.

With regard to the Long Branch event comments were made about the lower than anticipated turnout although the meeting was well publicized. The group agreed that at least one recurring topic arises at each meeting, which is the need for information on how to form an effective tenants association. Group also noted that people are aware of their percentage rent increases from year to year.

A discussion ensued about the effectiveness of the voluntary rent guidelines. Rick emphasized that property managers are mindful of the guidelines and make efforts to work with the guidelines. A comment was made that perhaps the smaller landlords require more focus. A question arose about how the guidelines are developed. Rick responded that it is determined based upon the Consumer Price Index which is not always current.

The group agreed that tenants feel that there is a connection between their personal income increases and the increase in rent. It was suggested that we need to help educate the public about why rent prices increase.

Rick suggested that a recommendation be included the need for an ongoing effort to create new communication tools. Development of a website is a good idea but may take more time. Also, how can we find out about the information tenants received from landlords at move in? A campaign with the landlords to encourage them to get information out would be useful.

Leesa said that she could find out what goes into the move-in package of her member organization.

The following ideas were presented:

- Develop a County webpage for tenants on how to form effective tenant association and other renter issues.
- Develop a pamphlet, for audiences that either do not have access or are not computer savvy. (Seniors in particular are resistant to using the computer.)

Chuck mentioned that we must encumber funds for the survey ASAP. Alice is working with the County print shop to get printing cost information. Alice will email a draft survey to committee members. Goal is to have survey printed in June and have results during August.

Chuck mentioned that we must have entire report completed by October 1 and reiterated that the work group is a good step forward and that one of the key recommendations must be that some one continues the work. By end of June, core of the report must be completed in order to meet our deadlines.

Chuck suggested that the report include brief overview information on what is in the code.

Patrice will get copies of other task force reports for formatting ideas for the report and a copy of the Landlord/ Tenant Complaint form.

Debbie presented draft work plan for Committee 2. She will bring the edited version to the next meeting, as the one presented was a first draft.

No other committees presented updates. Maureen requested that all committees be prepared to present work plan reports at the next meeting.

There was no other business and no visitors present.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.